

AP 2715 Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice

Reference:

Accreditation Standard IV.B.1.a, e, & h

Introduction:

If a trustee violates the Board's Code of Ethics, it may harm the Board and the College in a number of ways. Violating ethics laws may subject the Board and College to legal action, which can involve penalties and significant costs or create circumstances that may jeopardize the District's Accreditation. Not addressing ethical and legal violations may cause the public and College employees to lose respect for and trust in the Board. The strategy a Board uses to address ethical breaches depends on whether the behavior violates related laws or the Board's own Code of Ethics.

Procedure:

Anyone claiming or expressing the possibility that a Board member has violated the Board's Code of Ethics shall make such violation known to the Board of Trustees.

1. In the event that the alleged violation constitutes a violation of the laws of the State of California, such violation shall be referred to the District Attorney or the Attorney General.
2. Other alleged violations shall be put on the Board's agenda for response by the accused Board member. This will be an opportunity for the trustee to explain his/her perspective and motives.
3. If in fact it is the conclusion of the majority of the trustees that there has been a violation of this policy, the Board of Trustees may act in one of the following manners depending on the severity and intent of the violation:
 - a. The Board President talks to the person about the implications of the perceived violation, including the negative impact the behavior will have on the College, the Board, and the individual trustee.
 - b. An *ad hoc* committee may be appointed to look into the allegations and make a recommendation to the Board President or the Board as a whole.
 - c. The Board may hold a workshop or retreat on codes of ethics and the importance of upholding them. All trustees discuss interpretations of the code and reinforce expected behavior.

- d. The Board may, in a meeting, make a public statement of expected Board behavior, adopt a Board resolution about what expected behavior is, and/or publicly reaffirm the ethics policy. This course of action alerts the public that individual violations are not condoned by the Board.
 - e. The Board may issue a public statement in which it expresses concern with an individual trustee's behavior. The statement would be made at a Board meeting.
 - f. A last resort is a Board vote to censure the trustee's behavior. Censure distances the Board from the unethical behavior of one of its members and is a clear, public statement that unethical behavior is not condoned or tolerated.
4. If illegal or unethical behavior occurs during a Board meeting (such as remaining at the Board table when the trustee has a conflict of interest, engaging in debate or discussion with audience members on topics not on the agenda, attacking a speaker or not following the Board's meeting procedures), undermine the chair or the Superintendent/President, the chair can state what the expectations and standards are of Board behavior and/or state that the behavior violates Board policy and/or procedures.